



NOAA Restoration in Chesapeake Bay

Why Bay Grass?

Loss – Today, only about 20% of the historic acreage of underwater grasses remains in the Bay.

Habitat – Bay grass provides habitat and shelter for juvenile fish and blue crabs. Studies show that density of blue crabs is 30 times greater in vegetated areas than unvegetated areas.

Clean water – Bay grass beds filter polluted runoff from land and release oxygen into Bay waters via photosynthesis.

Food – Bay grass provides food for waterfowl and many other aquatic species.



NOAA's Bay Grass Restoration Efforts

In FY04, NOAA spent over \$1.3 million on bay grass research and restoration in Chesapeake Bay. The Chesapeake 2000 Agreement calls for restoration of 185,000 acres by 2010. Chesapeake Bay partners, including NOAA, are making progress toward that goal with 80,000 acres restored thus far.



It's simple to set up a growing tank like this in your office. Plants sprout within days and are ready to plant in the Bay after only two months.

NOAA Restoration Day 2005

On June, 14, 2005, NOAA employees will help restore the Chesapeake Bay by planting bay grass, oysters, and wetland plants at the Navy's Webster Field Annex in St. Mary's County, MD. Seventeen NOAA offices have been growing underwater grasses in office tanks in preparation for the June event. Webster Field Annex covers 1,000 acres on the upper St. Mary's River and contributes to the waters and tributaries along the lower Potomac River—part of Chesapeake Bay's watershed. Webster Field Annex was selected as the site for this year's NOAA Restoration Day because of an existing NOAA-funded restoration project at the site. That project involved planting 1,300 feet of shoreline with wetland plants and creating an offshore oyster reef and bay grass bed. The highly successful partnerships formed as part of this project earned it a Coastal America Award in 2004.

ISSUE

Almost a third of the underwater grasses in Chesapeake Bay died during 2003, unable to survive because of rainfall driven pollution.

CONTACT

Stephanie Hunt
NOAA Restoration Center
1315 East-West Highway
Silver Spring, MD 20910
301-713-0174
stephanie.hunt@noaa.gov
<http://restorationday.noaa.gov>

**National Oceanic and
Atmospheric Administration**